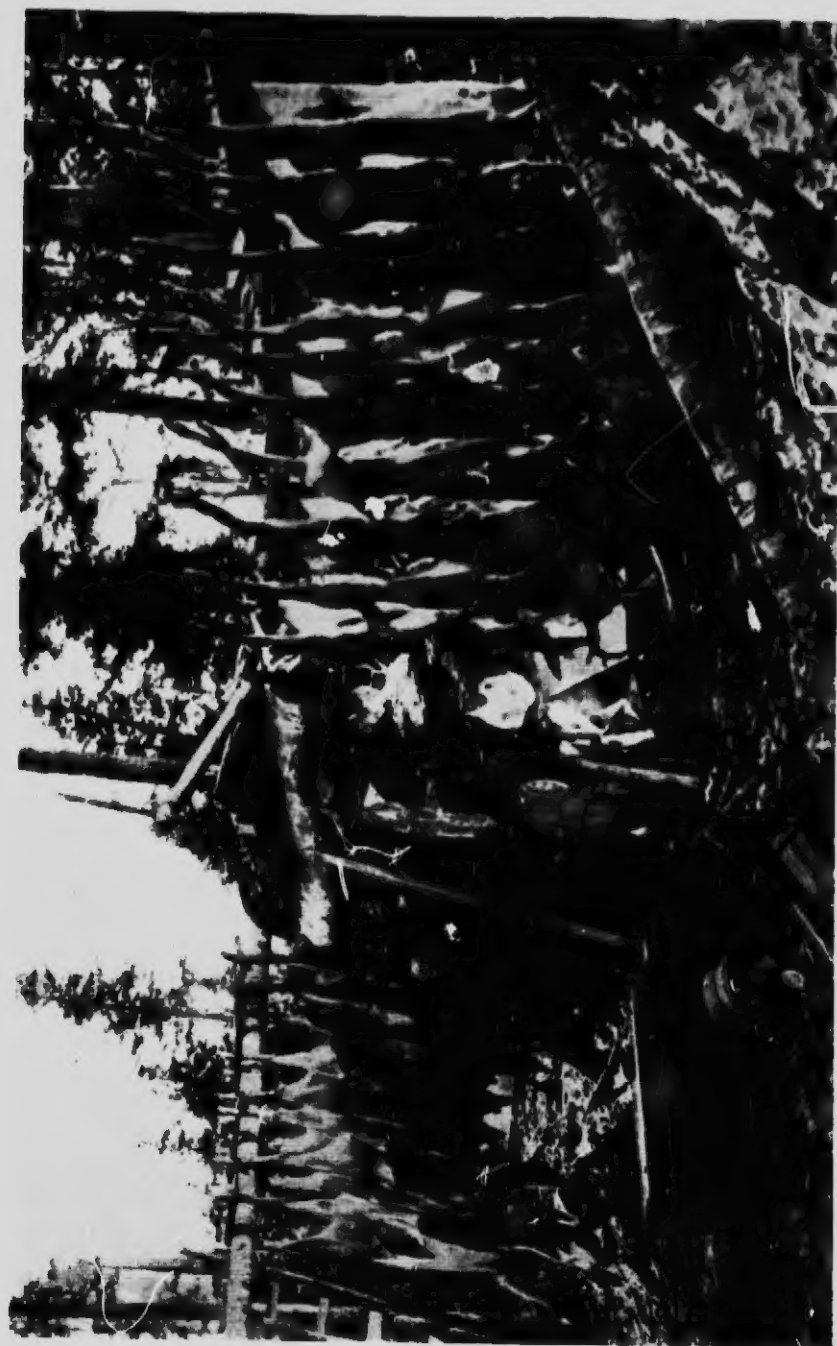


THE
GAME FIELDS OF ONTARIO.



THE RESULT OF THE HUNT.

THE GAME FIELDS

OF

ONTARIO

BY

JAMES DICKSON,
Ontario Land Surveyor.

"The hunt, the shot, the glorious chase,
The captured elk, or deer;
The camp, the big bright fire, and then
The rich and wholesome cheer:
The sweet, sound sleep, at dead of night,
By camp fire, blazing high—
Unbroken by the wolf's long howl,
And the panther springing by."
—*Song of the Pioneers.*

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THE GAME FIELDS OF ONTARIO.

Voyaging across the Georgian Bay a few years ago during the holiday season, the writer chanced to be seated on the steamer's deck, near a group of southern gentlemen. They were exchanging opinions about this Dominion, its productions and resources, variegated with an occasional remark upon the beauty of the scenery through which the vessel was ploughing her way.

One of the party said to another, "Can they grow wheat in Canada?" From the expression of the speaker's face there could be no doubt that he was not perpetrating a joke, but was honestly asking for information as to the capabilities of the country, about which he evidently knew nothing.

For a moment I was amazed at the idea of any white citizen of the continent grown to years of maturity being so ignorant as not to know that that cereal was one of our staple productions. But on second thought the idea struck home that this was only one incident of many, which goes to show how close neighbours people can be, in fact, be associated to a certain extent in business and other relations, be each persons of importance in their own sphere, and still live in utter ignorance of aught beyond their own immediate locality.

I felt that that remark was only one more evidence of how nicely the world will continue to thrive and prosper without us after we have gone off on our final emigration to that shore from whence there are no return tickets. And what is the case with isolated individuals is equally

so with a large proportion of the population of our own, as well of other countries.

We Ontarions, in our self importance, are apt to look upon this Canada of ours as the hub of the world and Ontario as the hub of Canada.

Ontario is conceded by all to be the banner province of the Confederation, and even its locality is not known to many a British subject, its boundaries, extent and resources even are an utter blank to many of our own citizens.

Where is Ontario anyway, some may ask? Well, it lies between the parallels of 42° and $52^{\circ} 30'$ of north latitude, and between the meridians of $74^{\circ} 30'$ and 95° of west longitude from Greenwich. Let us take a run around its boundaries. Starting at its southeast angle in the River St. Lawrence some twenty-eight miles west of the junction of that stream with the River Ottawa following the main channel of the St. Lawrence, the centre of the great lakes, Ontario, Erie, Huron and Superior, and their connecting rivers, to the mouth of Pigeon River on the west shore of Lake Superior. Then follow the chain of waters formed by Pigeon River, Rainy Lake, Rainy River and Lake of the Woods to the northwest angle of the latter. Thus far we have been following the international boundary between Canada and the United States. We now turn due north along the interprovincial boundary between the Provinces of Ontario and Manitoba to the Winnipeg River a few miles west of the mouth of the English River and ascend the Winnipeg to English River.

The magnificent English River and the still more majestic Albany River form the boundary between Ontario and the District of Keewatin to Hudson's Bay, a distance of some 650 miles as the crow flies. From the mouth of the Albany River, we strike southeasterly across Hudson's Bay and

James Bay to a point on the latter due north from the head of Lake Temiscamingue on the River Ottawa thus affording Ontario a large ocean frontage on the north, with its valuable fisheries.

Only forty miles of this interprovincial boundary between Ontario and Quebec has been delimited in the field to the north of Lake Temiscamingue. A channel about one chain wide and one mile long, locally known as "the devil's snay," connects the Blanche River flowing from the northwest and the Quinze flowing from the northeast at the north end of the delta formed by deposits from those two streams. Midway in this channel there stands, firmly planted in the soil, on its north bank, a stone pillar with the words Ontario and Quebec cut on its west and east sides respectively and as far as the line has been run it is defined by similarly marked stones, at intervals of one mile. From that monument the centre of the River Ottawa is the boundary between Ontario and Quebec to within thirty miles of the mouth of that stream, then we cut southerly following the easterly sides of the Counties of Prescott and Glengarry, to, as a surveyor would say, the place of beginning.

The total area of Ontario is 222,000 square miles or upwards of one hundred and forty million acres of land and water.

There are few parts of the continent of America so near the confines of civilization of which so little is known, or less has been written either as to extent of territory, beauty of scenery, salubrity of climate, or abundance and variety of game, both terrestrial and aquatic, as this Ontario of ours.

A few newspaper correspondents and tourist with pen, pencil and camera, have portrayed the beauties of the Muskoka Lakes, and drawn the attention of the public to a few salient points on the North shore of the great fresh-

water seas which form our southern frontier. Some few have penetrated for short distances into the wilds of the Upper Ottawa, and taken a flying trip via the romantic Tamagamingue Lake, down the Sturgeon River, crossed Lake Nipissing and threaded the mazes of the French River into Georgian Bay. Others have plied their paddle in the swift waters of the Neepigon River, and feasted their eyes on the beauties of the great Neepigon Lake or steered their way amongst the hundreds of islands in the Lake of the Woods. A few of the minor streams and lakelets have also been brought to the mind's eye of the untravelled portion of the community. But the vast extent of mountains and valleys, of lakes and streams which comprise our hinterland is still an unknown and untravelled wilderness except to the aborigine, the geologist and the surveyor. Even the hardy trapper and lumberman have only skimmed around its outer edges.

A few exploration lines have here and there been blazed out in anticipation of some commercial advantages, townships subdivided, gradually extending northwards, as the older sections became overcrowded.

The stalwart descendants of stalwart pioneers' becoming poineers in their turn, with axe and pack penetrate into the wild woods to change untamed nature into the manufactured article.

It was not until last season, 1900, that any systematic attempt was made by the province to ascertain, and accurately locate, a few of the hitherto indifferently known points at any considerable distance from the settled parts, and with the view of obtaining some accurate knowledge of their resouces. Some ten small parties, each in charge of an Ontario Land Surveyor were sent in various directions.

Each to open up lines for certain distances on a given course from some heretofore defined point and from those

lines as a base, do a certain amount of exploring also. They were only a few months in the field and a great deal could not be accomplished in that time.

But it was a beginning, and in the right direction, and the gentlemen in charge of the parties were of that class who never slight their work, but whose reports can be relied upon as being perfectly accurate. The positions of several important points have been definitely fixed, from which future surveys can be more cheaply and expeditiously projected. Besides proving beyond all doubt that the Province has large areas of rich agricultural land to which we can invite emigrants from the old world, and in which the young men of our own Province can find scope for their enterprise without expatriating themselves and going to swell the population of some other countries ; and also that we have in reserve large forests of valuable timber still untouched, also undoubted evidence of great mineral wealth in the bowels of the earth.

It is ardently to be hoped that our government may see its way clear to continue those surveys from year to year, until every lakelet and brooklet, every mountain and valley can be as accurately laid down on a map of Ontario as were those of the British Islands after the great ordinance survey of that Kingdom.

The cost of such a survey will no doubt be considerable, but it can be spread over a number of years. It would be an immigration agent of the very best variety thereby adding both to the population of the country and developing its resources.

So much so, that the outlay in cash would be a mere bagatelle in comparison with the advantages the community at large would derive therefrom.

Some of the writers about our northern wilds describe them to perfection down to the smallest detail, while others

evidently know nothing whatever of the subject, but draw solely on their imaginations. A few years ago a young man from the city was attached to the staff of a friend of the writer, who had charge of a survey party on the Upper Ottawa. Describing his experiences in a newspaper article, he wrote about how on one occasion they covered some sacks of bacon with balsam brush to protect it from the bears. Now who that knows anything about Mr. Bruin ever heard of one to which any quantity of balsam or any other variety of brush would be a barrier to a side of pork.

I once saw a profusely illustrated newspaper article entitled "Canoeing in the North"—one of the illustrations was named "Crossing a Portage." A man was portrayed staggering along, one end of a canoe on his head, the other trailing on the ground. That settled it, I never read a line of that article.

Only a small part of Ontario has yet been redeemed from its natural state and brought under cultivation. A line drawn due east from the Sault Ste. Marie, at the outlet of Lake Superior, to the Ottawa River will very nearly divide the settled from the unsettled part of the Province. North of that line and its western prolongation there is the new settlement at the head of Lake Temiskamingue, also those around Port Arthur and on the Wabigoon and Rainy Rivers. South of the Mattawan River, Lake Nipissing and French River, in the Districts of Parry Sound, Muskoka, Nipissing and Haliburton, there is still a large tract of wild land, most of which is likely to remain in a state of nature for all time.

In this section the Algonquin Park is located. That park embraces some twenty-one townships of fifty thousand acres each. Upwards of one million acres of land and water has been set apart for the sole purpose of propa-

gating game, conserving the water, and as a sanitarium. Lying as it does on the height of land between the valley of the Ottawa and the Georgian Bay, and including within its boundaries the head waters of all the principal streams in the Huron and Ottawa territory, also the great Opeongo Lake, there could not have been a better selection for the objects had in view. It is surrounded on all sides by a well-settled country, and is easily accessible either by canoe or travelled roads, besides having the Ottawa and Parry Sound Railway passing through its centre.

In that park and its environs to-day there are, at a conservative estimate, not less than three thousand head of moose deer alone, and a much larger number of red deer. It abounds also in all the fur-bearing animals to be found in the temperate zone. Twenty years ago it was literally teeming with beaver. But owing to the indiscriminate and wanton slaughter of those interesting and valuable animals by local hunters they had been almost exterminated before the park was set apart and a law passed protecting them. But now, since the district has been in charge of an efficient staff of keepers, they are increasing so rapidly that in the near future they will have become as numerous as ever. There probably never was a scheme conceived by any government which met with such general approval as the setting apart of that park. Politics, for the time being, were laid aside and all parties vied with each other in their endeavors to make it as near perfection as possible. The only fear seemed to be that the territory set apart would not be large enough to meet the requirements.

The section of country lying between the Georgian Bay and the Ottawa River, heretofore described as the "Huron and Ottawa Territory," is the principal home of the red

deer. They herd together and roam all over that district in countless numbers. They are also numerous in many other sections, but only in limited areas. In that territory is their principal breeding grounds and home. Owing to the wise restrictions put upon the numbers allowed to be killed by any one person during the last few years they are also rapidly increasing in numbers.

In addition to the Algonquin Park there is another, "the Rondeau Park," on the shore of Lake Erie, which has been set apart for the propagation of game. There several varieties of game birds have been imported and their breeding looked after with very satisfactory results so far. Of course any variety of birds which can remain in the Province all the year round must be budders, as no others can survive our winters unless kept in confinement and fed by hand.

Another large forest reservation with the same objects in view as that of the Algonquin Park, having an area of two thousand two hundred square miles, has lately been set aside in the Temagamingue District.

Its southern boundary is some thirty miles north of the most northerly point of Lake Nipissing, and it extends west to within eighteen miles of the west boundary of the District of Nipissing, having its south-west angle seven miles north from Wahnapiatae Lake, from thence due north forty miles, then due east an estimated distance of twenty-five miles to the Montreal River, then partly down that stream and partly parallel to it to within six miles of Lake Temiscamingue. The projected James Bay Railway will pass through the east part of it. It will be thus seen that it is easy of access from several points. It includes the whole of that magnificent sheet of pure limpid water, Tamagamingue Lake.

Lady Evelyn Lake, and a host of others, are equally beautiful, and all well stocked with trout. No part of its beauties has never been marred by the axe of the lumberman, and it seems the intention that it never shall be. All varieties of game abound therein, and it is one of the finest moose districts in the Province.

In those reserves we have not only districts set apart where gentlemen may go to rusticate and put in a brief holiday, but where they can take their wives and their families, to disport themselves and enjoy the beauties of nature, and the invigorating climate also.

The lakes are all dotted over with islands, both great and small, wooded to the water's edge. Ideal spots for summer cottages—which, no doubt, the government will permit persons who will respect the law and abstain from killing game to erect. There need be no unreasonable restriction put on the taking of fish, as no amount of fishing likely to be indulged in by the summer tourist will ever reduce their number. In this reserve it will require at least three seasons continuous canoeing to explore all its waters and not go over the same route twice.

The whole country lying north of the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway for its entire distance, from where it bids adieu to the Valley of the Ottawa at the town of Mattawan, two hundred miles west of Ottawa city, to the west boundary of the Province, some thirty miles west of Rat Portage, is practically an unbroken wilderness. An immense extent of mountain and valley, of lake and river, extending to the Arctic ocean. Its loneliness broken only by the trading posts of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company and the birchen wigwam of the aborigine, but so thoroughly has it been explored by the employees of that company, that the initiated can paddle his light canoe, with comparatively short portages, over the whole vast extent.

In nearly the whole of this vast area, moose and caribou roam in countless numbers and the annual export of furs by the company demonstrate the fact that the furbearing animals from the smallest to the greatest are neither decreasing in numbers nor quality.

What a mine of wealth is here stored up for the benefit of future generations, if any reasonable means are adopted to preserve it from destruction. It is drained by innumerable streams of all sizes, from some large enough to be navigated by good sized vessels down to the tiniest rivulet. Lakes of all sizes in which the waters are gathered together are there by the thousand. All the waters of the purest quality, all teeming with fish, many the feeding and breeding grounds of innumerable water fowl, enclosed and overhung by all varieties of timber and vines adapted to the latitude. It contains nearly everything requisite for man's comfort and industries. And yet of this vast territory where a kind providence has been so lavish of its favors, and which lies at our very doors, so little is known.

During the last twenty years the writer has visited a good many parts of the Province on the outskirts of civilization from the upper waters of the Blanche River to, and away above, the head of Rainy Lake; to spend days, weeks and months traversing its lakes and rivers, travelling through the wilds at all seasons of the year from the sweltering days of July to snowshoeing at 40° below zero, and pitching the light cotton tent on four feet of snow, but a glance at the map of the Province convinces him that he has seen almost nothing of the country, and has never been in the parts where game is to be met with in the greatest abundance, and yet he can scarcely recall a day in which he did not see less or more signs of some variety or other.

While moose are now numerous in nearly all the unsettled parts of the Province, I am not aware that caribou have ever been met with south of the chain of waters formed by Lake Nipissing and French and Mattawan Rivers, and it is only after some distance north and west of those streams is reached, that they are found to be numerous. There is also abundant evidence in the parts of the antlers and skulls still found that Ontario was, at no very remote period the home of the wapiti or elk also, although there are none to be found in it now except perhaps an odd one along its western border. This is the more remarkable from the fact that in nearly all parts of the adjacent Province of Manitoba they are quite numerous. In that Province they and the moose sojourn side by side apparently in the best of fellowship. It is also rather remarkable that there are no prairie chickens in eastern Ontario, although they are as abundant as are our partridge all along from Manitoba to a considerable distance east of the Neepigon River.

It would be an experiment well worthy of a trial for the government to procure a few pairs each of elk and caribou, also a few dozen brace of prairie chickens and let them loose in the Algonquin Park. Their natural food is there in as much abundance as anywhere else, while the cover is better, and the winter less severe than it is in their habitation farther west. I can conceive of no reason why they should not remain and prosper there. Should the experiment prove a success it would furnish a splendid addition both to the quantity and quality of our game.

There have been a great many alterations and additional restrictions in our game laws during the past few years, and there is still a wide divergence of opinion as to their efficiency as they are at present, both as to the number one man may kill and the season for doing so. A great many hunters would prefer both a longer and a later season, and

the right to take more than two deer per man, while others are of the opinion that two deer is one too many and that if a close season of several years was fixed as is the case with moose, the increase in numbers would amply repay them for their enforced abstinence. Some of the settlers in the deer country are especially bitter because they are not permitted to slay all they want at any season of the year. They seem to have come to the conclusion that game was produced for them and them alone, and that none other has a right to hunt on their preserves. They overlook the fact that a wild animal belongs to no man until it is captured. That the inhabitants of the towns, cities and older settled sections contribute towards the support and development of the country as much or more than they do, and have rights and privileges which cannot be overlooked, and that it is the bounden duty of any government to enact such laws as will do the greatest good to the greatest number.

There are parties who feel as if a grievous wrong had been done them if they do not get a full bag each day they shoulder a gun or fishing rod. Others again care very little whether much or very little game falls by their hand. They have gone out to enjoy for a brief season a change of scene and change of air, to breathe for a few days the air of the green woods and have a good time free from all business cares, and enjoy the sight of a deer or moose dashing away unharmed through the forest as much or more than they would that of a dead carcass even were the noble quarry brought down by their own hand. When there are none of the denizens of the woods to be met with in their native wilds alive and free, one of its principal charms is wanting, and I have no sympathy with the man who would spill the life blood of one of those noble animals merely in order that he might boast of having killed a moose, and have a set of antlers adorn his hall or dining room.

It is urged by many that the poor settlers in the back country should be permitted to kill deer at all seasons of the year. And without looking into the matter this sounds reasonable.

As the law is at present, settlers, also Indians in unorganized territories, are not amenable to any of the provisions of the game laws in as much as they may kill all they require for their own use or that of their families, but must not otherwise dispose of any. And this privilege is being abused in a manner that no doubt was never contemplated by the Legislature. I have known muskrats and beaver taken under this provision; and when the parties were remonstrated with, they coolly said they had been killed for food. Kill a beaver, destroy a skin worth from \$10 to \$12, for fifty cents' worth of meat. Had the party who trapped them not known where he could dispose of the pelts, those animals would never have been caught.

I submit, and have urged, that the animals that are thus allowed to be taken should be clearly specified in the act, and that they should be restricted to the taking of deer, moose and caribou alone. This is a striking illustration of the wisdom and propriety of hedging round unthinking and improvident persons with such restrictions as will effectually prevent them from doing anything the Legislature never contemplated they should do.

As to poor settlers' rights, how many of them, or what percentage of our population ever hunt any at all? There are not twenty per cent. of the settlers in any newly opened townships who ever either fire a shot, handle a steel trap, or set a dead-fall. No doubt there are a number, but they too are in a small minority who annually spend ten days or two weeks in the fall of the year in the woods to have a deer hunt and a few days' fishing. But at no other season of the year do those men ever handle either a rifle or

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shot gun. And not one of such is ever heard complaining that the game laws are too strict. Here let me invite the reader to look around in either town or country and note how small a percentage of the population ever indulge in even this annual outing. I submit that I am well within the mark when I say that not one settler in ten ever hunts any.

Go through any of the townships, even in the heart of the deer and fur country ; ask the first twenty settlers you meet if they kill many deer, and the answer of three-fourths will be "I never shoot any ; I have no time for hunting. I find more profitable occupation in improving my farm." Pass through any newly formed settlement, and if you find an ill fenced small clearing, with small dilapidated buildings, a very poor showing of farm implements, but a good up-to-date rifle, a few rusty steel traps scattered around, with one or two pelts of wild animals nailed on a wall, your approach heralded by a slim-flanked hound or two, not always chained up, and you may rest assured that you have struck the domicile of the poor settler who is so constantly crying out against the stringency of the game laws. At the end of a decade pay another visit to the same locality and you will note the improvements in all the surroundings of the man who devotes his whole time to his farm, while the poor settler, who is ready at all times to abandon axe or cradle for a chance shot at a deer, is still occupying the same tumble-down primitive little shack ; still uttering bitter invectives against the game laws and all governments in general. I have known some of those to bring down as many as from forty to sixty deer in a single season, but never knew one to produce a large field of fall wheat or any other variety of grain. In this category I do not include the professional trapper, who goes into the woods long with, or a little in advance of the respective farmer,

with the sole object of living by the fruits of the chase, but only those who style themselves farmers and whose want of success in life proves to a demonstration that farming and hunting are two occupations which, to put it mildly, do not thrive well together. It would prove an unalloyed blessing to all such men and their families if there were not a head of game in the country.

Again, it is being urged, better let the settler kill the deer than have them devoured by wolves. This style of argument is too absurd to be worth discussing, although it may at first sight seem like sound reasoning.

Many deer are no doubt annually destroyed by wolves, but the numbers so made way with are steadily decreasing as the wolves are undoubtedly growing scarcer each year, and moreover, lighting a candle at both ends is not the best way to prolong its existence.

Mr. Wolf, though a very great rogue, is held responsible for many depredations of which he is not guilty; for numerous crimes committed by the settlers themselves. I have never yet met the man who admitted to ever having killed game out of season or a greater number than the law entitled him to.

A few years ago the writer was sent into one of our remote back townships to do some work. It was in the heart of the deer country, in the month of March. The snow was deep with a heavy crust. The wolves were reported as "killing the deer out of face," to the lasting injury of the poor settlers. I never saw the track of a wolf during the trip; but driving along a main highway one day I saw the newly slaughtered heads of five deer stuck in a row, nose down in the snow by the side of the road, set up there presumably by the wolves, a casting of the gauge of battle at the feet of the law.

The following day business called me to the home of a settler. His shack stood on the bank of a lake famous for its trout. As I approached the little cabin I was welcomed by the baying of a half-starved hound chained to a stump of a tree. The quantity of deer hair scattered around bore ample testimony to the source of his food supply. The owner, a great, stout young man, in the prime of life, stood pipe in mouth by the side of a hole in the ice, bobbing a short line up and down, fishing for trout. A fair average specimen of the poor settler who is a daily martyr to oppressive game laws, and the wolves. There was abundance of work to be had in a lumber camp within an hour's walk of his home, but he was subject to a chronic attack of illness whenever he essayed to swing an axe or pull a saw, while he invariably enjoyed robust health while either trapping or fishing.

On another occasion I had a professional call into another section of the deer country where there were some poor oppressed settlers. Here also the wolves were said to be committing sad ravages. I and my party had snowshoed all day without seeing either a track of a wolf or deer. Towards evening in a small grove of hemlock we came across a dozen or so of old deer beds, but not a single deer. Leading out from amongst the hemlocks were four depressions or trails in the snow as if a log had been drawn through it. All the trails converged into one, a short distance from the hemlocks, which headed in the direction of a settler's clearing. Need we pause to consider what those trails meant? Here was a small herd completely wiped out by *wolves* at a season of the year when the hide was utterly worthless, and there was scarcely flesh enough on the bones to hold them together. This is the first instance on record of wolves having drawn the carcasses of deer through the frozen snow to their dens.

A couple of years ago some friends were out on their annual fall hunt, a settler proposed to keep their hounds until the following year. One of the party remarked, "the dogs may not be properly fed." "Oh," replied the settler, "there is no danger of that; we have always plenty of venison to feed the dogs on."

These are only a few specimen cases which might be multiplied to any extent.

A keen controversy is being waged as to whether deer should be allowed to be killed in the water. And also whether it would not be a wise thing to abolish hounding.

As to the former, it seems as if it made very little difference where the animal is killed so long as the number allowed to be taken is not exceeded. But as to hounding, there is room for a wide divergence of opinion. I never had a quick enough eye to make a successful still hunter. Neither could I see any sport in standing by the side of a run-way — and a man can so place himself at some point or other that he can almost touch the deer as it dashes past — and shoot it down when it is driven up to him by the hounds; or sit in a canoe by the side of a lake or river until the hunted animal is in such a position that a few vigorous strokes of the paddle will place it as completely at his mercy as is a fettered ox in the hands of the butcher.

There are great numbers of keen sportsmen who would never get a deer if hounding were abolished. Gentlemen whose opinions are well worthy of the highest respect and in whose ears the baying of a hound in full cry is the sweetest of music, and some of whom are physically incapacitated from still hunting. It is a well conceded fact that all men cannot see eye to eye with one another, and different individuals hold very divergent views as to what constitutes enjoyment.

It is the duty of every legislature to enact such laws as will confer the greatest amount of good to the greatest number and infringe as little as possible on the rights of any. But it becomes sometimes necessary to have laws on the statute books that will prevent men from doing that which, though with the best of intentions, may prove detrimental to their own interests.

Hunting deer with hounds has already been abolished in several places, and there has never been an attempt made to reinstate it. In the interest of future generations I should say put a stop to hounding at once.

In still hunting the intelligence of the hunter is pitted against the instincts of the hunted; very often a well-matched pair. And even should the game not have taken the alarm, it requires a keen eye, a light step, and not a little hard labor and endurance to successfully stalk such sagacious and wary animals as are our moose and deer. It is only at the end of a successful stalk that the hunter realizes that he has accomplished a feat that he has a right to feel proud of; that his own unaided muscle and perseverance have secured the prize.

Some sportsmen allege that more wounded deer are lost to the hunter and die in some unknown thicket by still hunting than when shot before the hounds. Such may or may not be the case. Different individuals have no doubt had different experiences, and each will argue from the standpoint of his own experience.

The writer has spent nearly all his life either in a deer district or on the borders of one, and can recall a time when hounding both in eastern and central Ontario was unknown. The sight of one or more in the clearings, or feeding in the woods along with the domestic cattle was so common as not to cause a passing remark. There were no breach loaders or repeating rifles in those days, but a

common fowling piece which would chamber three buck-shot or carry a bullet straight for one hundred yards was considered good enough to shoot deer with. And they did their work, too. Each township would average perhaps half a dozen settlers who were fond of hunting, who could secure a deer whenever they chose to go out. A few would be killed by the boys on the spring crust, but public opinion so frowned upon this practice that it was seldom indulged in to any great extent.

One word as to the long range rifle, which is deemed so essential these days. In a country such as Ontario where there is no open prairie, with the exception of a newly burned district, it is seldom that the sportsman will get a shot at a greater distance than from one to two hundred yards, and a weapon that will carry true for that distance is as good as one that will kill at one thousand yards. To the average sportsman, a deer at a distance of even five hundred yards is by no means a large target, when viewed along a rifle barrel, even when standing still, and a much more difficult mark to hit when on the run. Yet I have heard hunters boasting how they pumped lead after that blankety-blank buck as long as he was in sight. They perfectly well knew that their chance of bagging the game was not one in ten, still they continue to shoot until either the animal is out of sight or their magazine is exhausted. No doubt many deer are mortally wounded in this manner that are never even looked after. No man would ever waste his ammunition at such a long range if he knew his gun at most was only good for two hundred yards. Were hunters restricted to the use of only such weapons fewer dead deer would be left in the woods to feed the fox and wolf.

It was suddenly discovered that the common collie dog would run deer for a short distance ; and that after one or

two had been shot down in front of them they would continue the chase until the game was either killed or had taken water. Then hounds were introduced. There was a great slaughter for a few years. The game began to grow scarce, then disappeared altogether. I would ask any of my readers to name a district which was formerly stocked with deer, and which still remains in its natural state, where they ceased to be, before the introduction of hounding. If hounding was put a stop to now, and the present restrictions as to the number an individual is allowed to kill remain in force in less time than a single decade, our unreclaimed lands would be as well stocked with them as ever they were. And many of our people who have now to travel long distances in order to secure a haunch of venison would then find deer in abundance at their own doors.

There is no doubt that the feeling in favor of abolishing hounding is steadily gaining ground in Ontario and I was pleased to see in the report of a meeting of a committee of the Game and Fish Protective Association of North America held the other day in the city of Montreal that a resolution in favor of abolishing the hounding of deer was carried unanimously without discussion.

There is undoubtedly a large portion of the inhabitants of the game country who have little sympathy with the game laws and openly boast that they are continually being violated and rejoice when an offender succeeds in eluding the hands of justice.

It is pleasing to be able to note that such a feeling is steadily losing ground.

Those persons overlook the fact that the game laws have been enacted for the sole and only purpose of preventing such as they from killing the goose that lays the golden egg. Had they their own way in the course of a few years there would be no game to kill.

Some people assert that it is the Indians who are killing off the game. This is a libel on the poor red man.

Whoever heard of an Indian, so long as the white man did not encroach on his hunting grounds, knocking a fawn on the head for fear it would again get in front of his dogs and allure them from larger game, leaving both hide and carcass to feed the fishes? Whoever heard of an Indian killing moose and deer for the hides alone, leaving the carcass to feed the fox and wolf or bait bear traps? So long as the Indian has the field to himself he only takes enough game to supply his own frugal wants and no more. It is only when the white man steps in to dispute his right to the hunting ground that he kills off all the beaver in a pond or destroys all the game he can in one season.

Can so much be said in favor of the white hunter?

But it is not the actual slayer of the animals who ought to be held responsible for the game laws being violated to the extent they are. There are other men higher up in the social scale who are as much and even more in the fault than they.

No hunter will kill game unless he can dispose of it to advantage. The professional hunter does not kill for the sport alone, but to make money, and if he knows there is no market for it he will not slay. The merchants and lumbermen who are ever ready to purchase heads, hides and meat at all seasons of the year and generally at a somewhat lower figure than the market value as an offset to the risk they run are more to be blamed than the hunters. If those gentlemen could be got at and a measure of justice meted out to them a large factor in perpetrating the evil would get its quietus.

Some lumber camps are kept well supplied in moose meat at from two to five cents per pound. I know of one case, I am pleased to say not in Ontario, where the owner

of a small camp did not purchase a pound of beef for a whole winter, but never lacked abundance of fresh moose meat at one and one-half cents per pound. In those instances the meat is nearly all supplied by Indians, as no white man would furnish it at those figures.

In looking over the Game and Fish Report for the Province of Ontario for the year 1899, the latest published, I find the names of a number of parties who had been convicted of killing moose, but who were let go on suspended sentence. Most of them seem to have been Indians. I fail to see the wisdom of this. Why should an Indian or half-breed have any more leniency shown him than a white man? No doubt a number of them were, as I have met them, pursuing their nefarious work in the depths of winter, off their reserve, where they could have no special rights, and were full well aware of the risks they ran. If they could only be induced to divulge the names of the parties to whom they disposed of their peltries in order that they might be brought to the bar of justice, I would commend the wisdom of letting them off on suspended sentence every time, otherwise, let them pay the penalty the same as any others. If there were no white men ready to purchase, this constant slaughter by Indians would soon cease.

There is one class of individuals in our northern country a considerable number of whom would be the better of being reminded of the fact that they have voluntarily assumed duties which they are expected to discharge in a more efficient manner, viz. the local justices of the peace. If it was once and for all fully understood that they would take up and investigate charges of alleged illegal hunting and trapping with the same vigor as they would in the case of a common thief it would prove to be a long step taken in the way of putting a stop to it. There are a number

who unhesitatingly discharge all the duties incumbent upon them. But there are others who seem to be totally oblivious of the fact that the oath they took requires them to administer the law as they find it, in the same manner as any Judge on the bench from the highest to the lowest does, and not wink at or condone or refuse to act altogether, simply because they, in their wisdom, think the law too severe, or occasionally take a hand in the game themselves. The law should be so amended as to make it compulsory on a Magistrate to enforce the law in accordance with the evidence in every case, or hand in his resignation to the Attorney General.

There is another class of gentlemen who ought to be held responsible to a considerable extent for infringement of the Game Laws. I allude to some of the members of the Legislature.

When laws were enacted some years ago to extend a greater measure of protection to our game, it was largely an experiment, as any measure must necessarily be which is opposed by any considerable section of a community. And it has been found necessary from year to year to make such alterations and amendments as experience suggested. We have always had two political parties keenly opposed to each other.

But whenever a measure was suggested for the better protection of our game the hatchet seemed to be buried, and any discussion which took place was more in the direction of assisting to make the Act perfect instead of opposing any of its provisions. And there has never been a single division called for in the House on any of the numerous bills which have been crystallized into law. But notwithstanding that fact, there are members who sat in the House and listened to the discussion on every clause. Never once was their voice heard either in support or condemnation

of a single section; but when in the game country denounce the game laws as tyrannical and harsh, merely for the sake of getting a slight advantage over a political opponent or catching a few wavering votes.

A member of parliament is quite within his rights in denouncing any law either in the House or out of it. But he is playing the demagogue when he denounces a measure which he himself assisted in passing.

But notwithstanding the fact that the game laws are held in supreme contempt by many, game of all kinds are rapidly increasing in numbers. A more healthy tone is steadily gaining ground. The poacher is year by year having less sympathy or encouragement from the public. And the day is not far distant when the person who kills game out of season will be dealt with as promptly and vigorously as a common burglar.

Exception is taken by some to the Province of Ontario exacting a license fee from non-residents. Such argue that they come in here, get their outfit, engage our men at good remuneration for their labor, and pay handsomely for everything they get. Consequently they should not be mulcted in a license fee of \$25 besides.

We agree with them that they individually pay well, and annually distribute a large sum of money in the country. But our game is the property of the whole of the people of Ontario and is as much an asset of the province as anything else, while the cash distributed by our visitors goes into the pockets of the few. Every individual in Ontario contributes his quota towards the protection of the game. This amounts now to a considerable sum each year. It is an outlay which is likely to materially increase in amount annually. It is most desirable that this branch of the public service should be made self supporting if possible, and not become an incumbrance to the general revenue.

And the only means available at present is the income from license fees and fines.

We believe that by a reasonable license system, and a strict observance of the law, a sufficient sum can be gathered in each year to, at least, balance the outlay. Further, it is felt that a reasonable license system imposed both on our own citizens and foreigners, prevents indiscriminate slaughter to a very great extent.

So far nothing has been said about our game birds. We have the Ptermigaw or white Partridge in the north. They are to be found anywhere north of the forty-seventh parallel of latitude, in many parts much further south.

We have the spruce partridge and the common partridge, or ruffed grouse, all over the province. Their sale has been prohibited for a term of years. It was high time this step was taken. I know of one village where there are only two stores. It has not even a blacksmith's shop and country tavern, where one of the merchants exported twenty-five hundred brace of the birds in a single season. We have also in the west part of the province the prairie chicken, a much more luscious bird than is the partridge, and which, with a little trouble, might be had in abundance in the east as well as the west. We have also the woodcock, the snipe, the plover and probably a few wild turkeys still in the Niagara peninsula. These birds remain with us all the year round. We have also in their season wild geese and a numerous variety of ducks, which make Ontario their breeding grounds, great numbers of which are annually brought down before they return in the fall of the year to replenish the larder of our Yankee colonists.

With the exception of our migrating birds our game never leaves our borders. It is here at all seasons of the year.

In the moose deer, with the single exception of the elephant, we possess the largest, the noblest and most majestic animal that roams the woods in any country under the sun. Magnificent to look upon in life and furnishing the most luscious of meat when dead. An animal which is easily stalked and perfectly harmless, unless when wounded and brought to bay, or in defence of its young. In the latter case it will be wise to adopt the same tactics as one would with a female bear under similar circumstances and attend to the dam before attempting too much familiarity with the younger members of the family. We have also the caribou and graceful red deer with numerous fur bearing and other animals, all in unlimited numbers. None of them have been hunted to such an extent that they are growing scarce. On the contrary all are steadily increasing in numbers.

We are the owners of a large extent of territory which is likely to remain in a state of nature—a huge game preserve, which only requires a reasonable amount of care and attention at a moderate outlay to ensure an unlimited supply of game for all time, and I submit that those who share our abundance should be required to contribute somewhat to its preservation.

But it is not only in the numbers and variety of our game animals, the beauty of our scenery and salubrity of our climate that we claim to be the possessors of a rich inheritance. We hold also that we have within our borders the richest inland fisheries, with the greatest variety and finest quality of fresh water fish, on the continent of America. From the common sucker and bull pout to the huge sturgeon and masquelonge, there is every variety in abundance—every variety of river, lake and brook trout. There are the rich fisheries of the large lakes on our southern border; those of the Ottawa and its

numerous tributaries on the east; the streams large and small, the lakes and ponds, each innumerable, many of them unknown which lie north of the height of land and discharge their waters into the Arctic Ocean, all teeming with every variety of fresh water fish, peculiar to the temperate zone; and as we approach the tide waters on the north, the fish of the sea also.

Take a seat by a window in a coach of the Canadian Pacific Railway as it speeds on its course for the whole distance from the east to the west boundary of Ontario; watch the numerous streams you cross, the numerous lakes of all sizes the track winds around, and there is scarcely one in which a disciple of Walton, were he to cast his line, would fail to take one or more varieties of luscious fish. You will cross the majestic Neepigon with its pure, crystal waters—the finest trout stream in the world. Take a seat in a canoe, ascend its smooth, swift current, and wherever you may choose to toss over the whirling troll or cast the deceitful, alluring fly you will find warriors worthy of your steel and eager for the fray.

Now that the long-standing dispute as to the ownership of the inland fisheries has been settled in favor of the provinces, and their management put into the hands of an efficient deputy minister and a capable staff of assistants, whose whole time will be devoted to them alone, they will be properly looked after and the restrictions as to indiscriminate slaughter better enforced.

It is one of the most difficult branches of the public service to look after and manage. The transition of the seasons, as to date, change so rapidly, with only a small difference of latitude, that almost every half degree has a different spawning season, necessitating as many different close seasons.

Fish are the most prolific of all creatures, either terrestrial or aquatic. No class of animals contributes so abundantly to the reproduction of its species. And no other class of animals becomes so quickly extinct, if their natural haunts are interfered with.

A large proportion of the food of the sucker is the spawn of other varieties of fish. While they, in their turn are a prey to all others. Thus nature, when left to herself keeps up an even balance.

It is only when man, the noble white man, takes a hand in the game and brings his superior intelligence and inventive faculties into play that the lakes and streams begin to show any diminution in the number of their fish. The habitant, who has his home by the side of our inland waters, may use his trole, his angle worm and night line, or even spear a few hundredweight during the spawning season; may in fact keep his table supplied with fish at all times, and there is no appreciable reduction in their numbers. But let a block of saw logs be stranded for a season and leave its bark on a spawning shoul. Alter the level of a lake, by either raising or lowering its waters, to the extent of even a foot or two; let the saw dust from a saw-mill be distributed through it, or let the water be tainted to the smallest extent by depositing offal therein, or by decaying timber on drowned land, and disastrous effects become apparent at once.

This is not so much in evidence with the coarser varieties, such as the sucker, pike, bass, etc., but with trout and white fish it proves invariably disastrous.

In some of our lakes, which were at no distant date famous for their trout, they are now almost extinct. But I do not know of any such, where the water has been allowed to remain in every respect in its natural condition. The restocking of some of our lakes with the same variety

of fish as they once contained, also the introduction of other varieties, has for a number of years engaged a good deal of public attention.

But I have grave doubts as to the introduction of new species into our small lakes proving successful. It seems to me that wherever a fish's natural food is to be found, or the water and bottom of a lake are congenial to its habits, that variety is invariably found ; and that where such conditions do not naturally exist, the attempt is likely to prove a failure.

As an illustration of the accuracy of this theory—Gull River, the most westerly and longest branch of the Trent waters, takes its rise in the District of Haliburton. It is composed of a chain of lakes, every one of which contains trout in large numbers. Trout, suckers, ling and minnows are the only varieties of fish found in any of them down to Moor's Lake, in the township of Lutterworth. But no trout have ever been found below that lake. The distance between Moor's Lake and Mud Turtle Lake, on the same river, is only some eight miles. There is no obstruction between to prevent the free passing to and fro of fish, and yet no trout have ever been found in Mud Turtle, nor masquelonge and bass in Moor's Lake. The dividing line between the laurentian formation and limestone lies between those two lakes, and in that section of country no trout are ever found where the geological formation is limestone. Below Moor's Lake the principal variety of fish are masquelonge and bass. Perch, sun fish, suckers, mud pouts and a small variety of herring are also abundant. But for the whole distance from Moor's Lake to the Bay of Quinte there are no trout.

About twenty-five years ago an attempt was made to stock those waters with trout. Some ten thousand trout fry were placed in Cameron and Balsam Lakes. A large

number were also placed in Sandy Lake, in the township of Harvey, at the same time. This is a beautiful sheet of clear water with a marl bottom and is noted for its bass. It empties into Buckhorn Lake through a large creek, flowing through a swamp some two miles long, yet no trout have ever been taken in any of those waters. Steps are being taken by the authorities to restock some of the depleted waters with fish and also to introduce some new varieties during the coming season. And it appears to be the intention to make a new departure and try the experiment of planting adult fish, instead of depositing fry to struggle through their babyhood in unknown surroundings and amongst a host of enemies.

This ought to be an experiment well worthy of a trial. Let a few dozen full grown fish be let go in a lake and deposit their spawn there and the young are much more likely to thrive in their native element, than if they had been brought forth in an artificial hatchery, fed by hand for a few weeks or even months and then let loose in a new body of water to shift for themselves, amid entirely new surroundings. In a hatchery the water is kept at an even temperature, in a lake the temperature varies with the depth. This alone is a powerful element against the young fish, even had they their customary food without any effort to procure it, on their part.

Some years ago an English gentleman took a number of deer hounds out from England to hunt deer on the pampas of central America, but the heat was so much more intense than in their native home that they could not run at all. The experiment was an utter failure. In course of time one of them brought forth a litter of puppies. When they reached maturity they were all right. They could withstand the heat of the sun as well as any native animal. Might not this teach us a lesson in the reproduction of our fish?

Complaints are being constantly heard that the fishery overseers are lax in the discharge of their duties, that illegal fishing is constantly being carried on. This may, to a certain extent, be the case, but those pessimists seem to forget that no man can be in more than one place at once, and that every citizen is in duty bound to assist in enforcing all our laws. If, when they find a party fishing at an illegal hour, instead of using it as a lever for an attack upon an overseer, they would notify the authorities what persons are breaking the law, such practices would quickly be put a stop to, and they would simply be discharging a duty they owe alike to themselves and neighbors.

But it is not alone as a field for hunting and fishing that we claim for the Province of Ontario a foremost place. It has within its borders, in its mountains and its valleys, its lakes and its rivers, scenes of rugged beauty and grandeur that are equalled by few and excelled by no other country. And in the abundance and variety of its flora and salubrity of climate, it takes second place with none.

Word painters may attempt to describe its beauties, or the artist with brush, pencil or camera to reproduce them on canvas or plate. All fall far short of nature. They are like portraits of the dead. Every feature and every line may be brought out as distinctly as the hand of the most skilled artist is capable of, not a detail wanting. But recall that same face lit up with the flush of life. Mark the glance of eye or smile on lip, listen for a single moment to the voice, and the failure of artistic skill to do justice to nature becomes at once apparent. This holds equally good in all branches of nature.

Take a photograph or a painting of a mountain side, a lake, or stretch of river, it may be perfect down to the smallest detail, one could not imagine anything lacking. But go into the wild woods, view the same scene lit up by

sparkling sunshine or silvery moon light. Look upon the tree tops as they sway to and fro in the gentle breeze. Watch the tiny wavelets as they merrily chase each other, inanimate nature endowed with life, a denizen of the forest bounding through its glades, or breasting the waters. See the monarchs of the forest as they bend and crash in the howling tempest. The sleeping waters roused into life as they toss, tumble and shriek in their mad endeavours to burst some rocky barrier. Then ask what pen or pencil can do justice to nature, much less improve upon it. Loll on some grassy bank during the silent watches of the night when all nature is hushed in repose, the stillness broken only by the distant cry of the loon, or hoot of night owl, and one can then realize what the great poet means when he speaks of "the music which cannot be heard."

True we cannot take the tourist over scenes rendered famous by some great historical event. We cannot take him over some ancient battle field and point out the position of the contending hosts. We cannot show off the remains of castellated towers. We may not be able to chant our claims to glory, nor loiter in innumerable spots made famous in song or story, as they can do in various other parts of the world.

But as new fields are being reclaimed from the wilds, and the plow of the husbandman is still unearthing so many relics of departed generations of men, so many ancient battle fields, town and village sites, and cities of the dead, there is no doubt this province at one period of time, and of no very remote date, had as large a population as their primitive methods of obtaining a livelihood would admit. And had this western hemisphere made any progress in literature, wherein might have been treasured up the history of their rise and fall of nations, their battles, their tribal and family feuds, their loves and

their hates, the traveller in this land would meet with as many interesting historical associations as in any other part of the world.

It has been the writer's privilege to skim across the waters of many of our lakes and rivers from the largest to the smallest, both in sunshine and shade, in calm and in storm, and he has yet to meet either lakelet or brooklet, large enough to float a small bark canoe, where a true lover of nature will not find ample reward for his labour even should he fail to land a fish or bring down a feather. And after a brief sojourn the wilds he will return to civilization more than ever impressed with the truth that there are histories in rocks, "books in running brooks, sermons in stones and good in everything."